DC #16

DIRECT CURRENTS

BOOKS SHIPPING IN MAY

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BATMAN BUTTONS

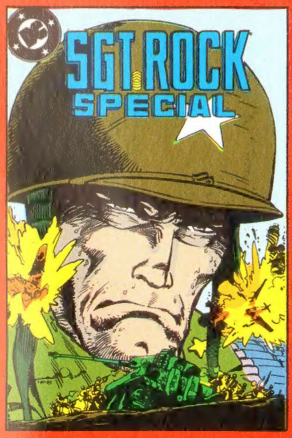
FIRESTORM
transformed

JUSTICE LEAGUE: A NEW BEGINNING
trade paperback

THE UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY OF LEX LUTHOR
one-shot Prestige Format

PLUS...

Various views on revitalizing major DC Comics characters



Cover Of The Month
SGT. ROCK SPECIAL #4

READ *THE UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY OF LEX LUTHOR*... IF YOU DARE

He's arguably one of the most influential men in America today. He's *inarguably* the evilest.

His name is Lex Luthor . . . and whatever Luthor wants, Luthor gets—even if it's the life of a man who threatens his privacy.

But it's Clark Kent who's arrested for the brutal murder of down-and-out biographer Peter Sands, a man who hoped to climb back to the top with **THE UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY OF LEX LUTHOR.** All it got him was dead.

What are the secrets of his past that Luthor is willing to kill for . . . secrets that the merciless criminal mastermind wants kept dead and buried?

THE UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY OF LEX LUTHOR is a one-shot special in the Prestige Format, written by James Hudnall, with art by Eduardo Barreto. Full-process coloring is by Adam Kubert. The cover is painted by Eric Peterson.

Learn secrets that can only be found in THE UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY OF LEX LUTHOR . . . but don't let on that you know, if you value your life.

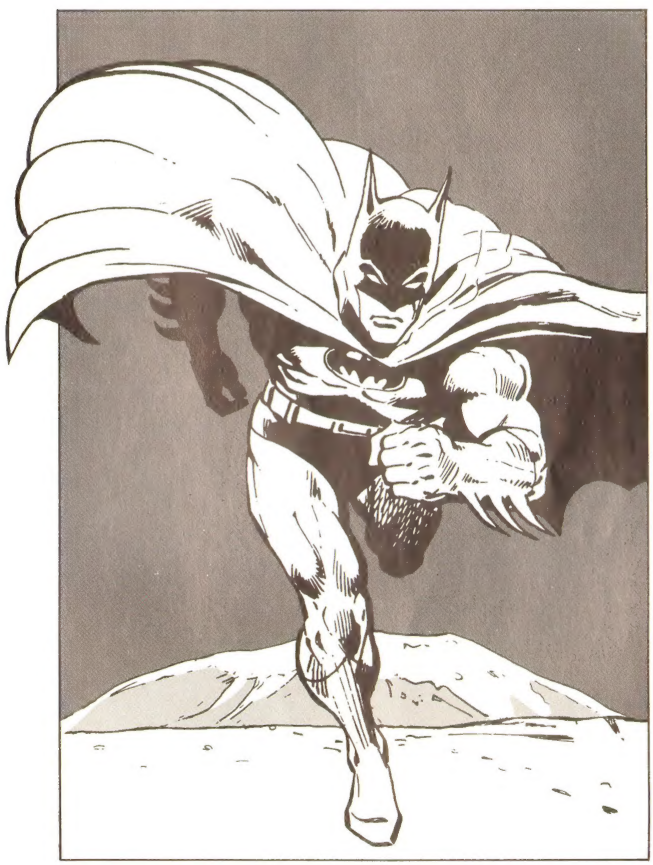
SUPERMAN CAPS AND BATMAN BUTTONS

The Cap of Steel.
The Buttons of the night.

These are the two latest and greatest collector's items from DC, starting with the **SUPERMAN BASEBALL CAP.** The royal blue poly-cotton poplin cap features the famous "S-shield" SUPERMAN logo embroidered in red, yellow, and black. It's adjustable, so one size fits all, but then, you'd expect no less from the Man of Steel's haberdasher.

Next up is **THE BATMAN BUTTON SET #2**, the second of three collections of buttons commemorating the long and distinguished history of Batman. This set contains four buttons, featuring classic BATMAN poses by such Darknight Detective notables as Neal Adams, Jim Aparo, Carmine Infantino, and Marshall Rogers. Like its predecessor, THE BATMAN BUTTON SET #2 is limited to 10,000 numbered sets.

Wear the cap. Pin on the buttons. Make a heroic fashion statement with the SUPERMAN BASEBALL CAP and THE BATMAN BUTTON SET #2.



TRADE PAPERBACKS

Many of DC Comics' trade paperbacks are always available. (And they make great gifts!) Here's a list of some of the books you can find in your comic book store on an ongoing basis:

BATMAN: SON OF THE DEMON
by Mike W. Barr and Jerry Bingham ($9.95 U.S./$13.95 Canada)

BATMAN: YEAR ONE
by Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli ($9.95 U.S./ $13.95 Canada)

CAMELOT 3000
by Mike W. Barr and Brian Bolland ($12.95 U.S./$17.50 Canada)

THE MAN OF STEEL
by John Byrne and Dick Giordano ($12.95 U.S./ $17.50 Canada)

THE NEW TEEN TITANS: THE JUDAS CONTRACT
by Marv Wolfman and George Pérez ($14.95 U.S./ $19.95 Canada)

RONIN
by Frank Miller ($14.95 U.S./ $19.95 Canada)

THE SHADOW
by Howard Chaykin ($12.95 U.S./$17.50 Canada)

WATCHMEN
by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons ($14.95 U.S./$19.50 Canada)

Paul Kupperberg, Writer
Peggy May, Editor
Veronica Carlin, Designer

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Printed in Canada

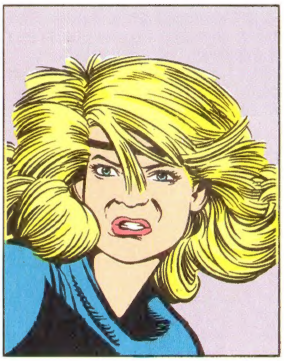
JUSTICE LEAGUE: A NEW BEGINNING TRADE PAPERBACK

From out of the ashes of the Justice League of America and the world-shaking events of LEGENDS came the re-vitalized JUSTICE LEAGUE . . . and the concept of group dynamics will never be the same.

In case you missed them the first time around, DC proudly represents the first seven issues of the League's adventures in **THE JUSTICE LEAGUE: A NEW BEGINNING** trade paperback. This 184-page book contains the complete story from those issues, including their covers.

Featured in the book are stories by writers Keith Giffen and J.M. DeMatteis, with art by Kevin Maguire and Al Gordon. Editor Andy Helfer contributes an introduction on the creation of the series, and Kevin Maguire and Al Gordon provide a new wrap-around cover.

The Justice League . . . possibly the most unlikely team of heroes ever to share an adventure and an argument. Learn the reason why in THE JUSTICE LEAGUE: A NEW BEGINNING trade paperback.



THE GREAT *FIRESTORM* TRANSFORMATION CONTINUES

Ronnie Raymond and Professor Martin Stein led a long and variably successful career as **FIRESTORM THE NUCLEAR MAN.**

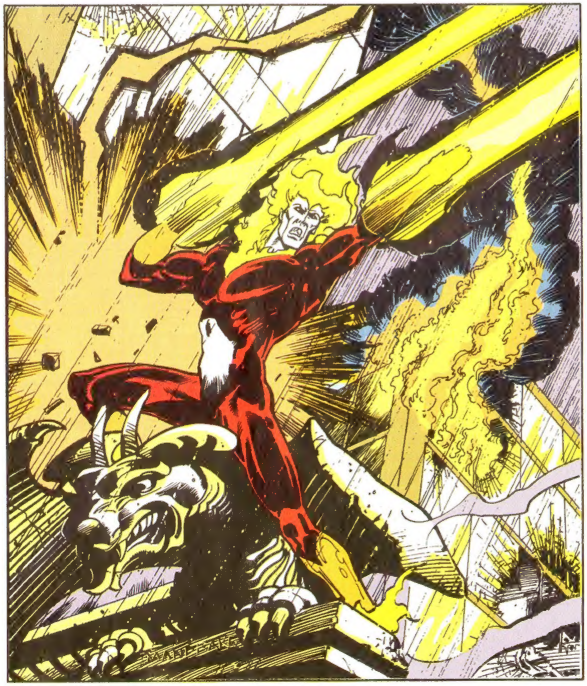
Then Mikhail Arkadin entered the picture and FIRESTORM'S life and nature changed.

Now the transformation of the Nuclear Man goes one step further as his soul merges with the flames of the earth to become the most incendiary force of all—a fire elemental. Filled with a new sense of purpose, he sheds both secret identity and his familiar costume, becoming in every respect a radically new and more powerful FIRESTORM.

But, in FIRESTORM #87, the world is forced to wonder whether he's going to be mankind's protector . . . or the cause of its destruction.

FIRESTORM writer John Ostrander takes a whole new direction as he's joined by artist Tom Mandrake to continue the reworking of one of DC's most volatile heroes.

FIRESTORM . . . he's not the man he used to be. And his is a story not to be missed.



BOOKS SHIPPING IN MAY

☐ **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ #7**
A deadly practical joke runs amok as the Jesters take their revenge on Waterdeep and Myrrth is most definitely not amused. Written by Dan Mishkin, with art and cover by Jan Duursema. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #456**
Superman finds "Redemption," while on Earth, Intergang is making a last-ditch attempt to silence the spy within its ranks. And until the Man of Steel can make it back home, it's up to the *new* Gangbuster to prevent the murder of Catherine Grant. Story, art, and cover by Jerry Ordway. $.75

ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #456

☐ **ANIMAL MAN #13**
Buddy is looking forward to getting back to his family and a "normal" life . . . but the problems lurking around the corner may assure that that doesn't happen. Written by Grant Morrison, with art by Chas Truog and Doug Hazlewood. Cover by Brian Bolland. *(New Format)* $1.50

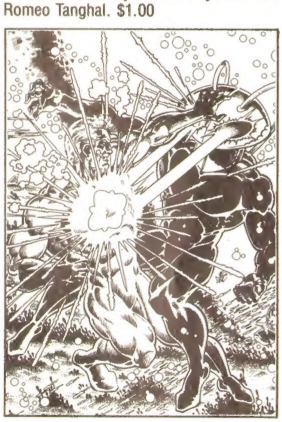
☐ **AQUAMAN #2**
(of a 5-issue mini-series)
Whatever's in those sealed transports is important enough for Aquaman and his fellow resistance fighters to risk destroying in hopes of crippling the invaders. Written by Keith Giffen and Robert Loren Fleming, with art and cover by Curt Swan and Al Vey. $1.00

☐ **BATMAN #435**
Part 3 of the 3-part "Many Deaths of the Batman": The Batman returns to Gotham and learns that the latest target of the mysterious Batman mass murderer is . . . Bruce Wayne. Written by John Byrne, with art by Jim Aparo and Mike DeCarlo. Cover by Byrne. $.75

☐ **THE BATMAN BUTTON SET #2**
The second of four sets of buttons, featuring classic Batman poses by Neal Adams, Jim Aparo, Carmine Infantino, and Marshall Rogers. These buttons are limited to 10,000 numbered sets. $8.00

☐ **BLACKHAWK #5**
The Blackhawks complete their China mission . . . and a key member of the team dies. Meanwhile, things are heating up stateside, as Natalie Reed is sought for murder and a shadow organization within the C.I.A. called the "Circus" is introduced. Written by Martin Pasko, with art and cover by Rick Burchett. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

☐ **CAPTAIN ATOM #30**
Part 11 of the 11-part "JANUS DIRECTIVE": The aftermath of the Janus Directive is explored as Captain Atom and Nightshade come to grips with their role in the deadly play. And, while on a Caribbean cruise, Atom and his family encounter Black Manta, which gives his kids a chance to see firsthand just what it is their dad does for a living. Written by Cary Bates, with art by Rafael Kayanan and Romeo Tanghal. $1.00



CAPTAIN ATOM #30

☐ **CHECKMATE #19**
While the Checkmate organization deals with the devastation wrought by the events of the Janus Directive, the Knights in the field are faced with a new menace that threatens to destroy them from within . . . a renegade agent who calls himself the Black Night. Written by Paul Kupperberg, with art by Rick Hoberg and Al Vey. Cover by Art Thibert. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **COPS™ #13**
Badvibes's newest invention spells trouble for the COPS: T.H.U.G.S. (Titanium Humanoid Ugly Good Squad). They are menacing Empire City, and the COPS pull out the stops to get them. Written by Doug Moench, with art by Pat Broderick and Bruce Patterson. $1.00

☐ **DETECTIVE COMICS #601**
Part 1 of a 3-part story: Driven to desperation, a seemingly harmless man seeks to protect himself with the aid of ancient magic . . . and even The Batman may not be able to stop the creature this turns loose on Gotham City. Written by Alan Grant and John Wagner, with art by Norm Breyfogle and Steve Mitchell. Cover by Breyfogle. $.75

☐ **DOC SAVAGE #10**
Doc's in the jaws of a dilemma as he's forced to choose between protecting Hidalgo from the armed forces of the Golden God and saving Beau and Anton, victims of snake bites in South America. Some will live . . . and one will die. Written by Mike W. Barr, with art by Rod Whigham and Steve Montano. Cover by Andy Kubert. *(Deluxe Format)* $1.75

☐ **DOCTOR FATE #7**
Petey goes back to his home dimension. Written by J. M. De Matteis, pencilled by Shawn McManus, inked by McKenna. Cover by McManus. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **THE DOOM PATROL #24**
The Patrol wages an assault on Red Jack at his mysterious home to save the life of Lodestone. Written by Grant Morrison, with art and cover by Richard Case and Scott Hanna. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **DRAGONLANCE™#10**
Part 2 of a 4-part story: On the floor of the Blood Sea, our heroes meet Sea Elves and Sea Dragons as they are forced into the deadly games at the Arena of Istar. Written by Dan Mishkin, with art by Mike Collins, Ron Randall, and Randy Elliott. Cover by Randall. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **FIRESTORM #87**
The saga of the new Firestorm continues as the world is forced to wonder whether he is now mankind's protector . . . or destroyer. Written by John Ostrander, with art and cover by Tom Mandrake. $1.00

☐ **FLASH #28**
Captain Cold and the Golden Glider together may mark the doom of the Porcupine Man . . . which will also spell the end of Flash. Written by William Messner-Loebs, with art and cover by Greg LaRocque and Larry Mahlstedt. $1.00

☐ **GAMMARAUDERS™ #6**
It's a totally rad time for all involved as Slash and Warlord Sassin slug it out for leadership of the Slugnoids . . . and those glitzy gals in prom dresses and Uzis, the Radical Debs, debut. Written by

BOOKS SHIPPING IN MAY

Peter Gillis, with art and cover by Martin King and Dave Cooper. *(New Format)* $1.25

GILGAMESH II #4
(of a 4-book mini-series)
Gilgamesh's search for a way to bring Otto back to life takes him into the void where his search will either be rewarded . . . or he will find himself joining his departed friend. Story, art, and cover by Jim Starlin, with coloring by Steve Oliff. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. Prestige Format.)* $3.95

GREEN ARROW #20
Part 2 of the 2-part "Trial of Oliver Queen": Oliver's life continues to fall to pieces as he tries to deal with his accidental killing of a child. Written by Mike Grell, with art and cover by Ed Hannigan and Dick Giordano. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.25

HAWK & DOVE #2
An imitation Mexican brooch transforms a street urchin into a vengeful Aztec goddess, creating insurmountable problems for Hawk, Dove, *and* Dove's mother. Written by Barbara and Karl Kesel, with art by Greg Guler and Scott Hanna. Cover by Guler and Karl Kesel. $1.00

HAYWIRE #11
Steve learns that Marlene is dead, leading Haywire to redecorate Greenwich Village. . . and then he runs up against armor more powerful than his, worn by someone who hates him. Written by Michael Fleisher, with art by Vince Giarrano. Cover by Giarrano. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

HELLBLAZER #20
Even more demonic than the Fear Machine itself . . . Constantine faces an ages old evil that lurks within the machine. Written by Jamie Delano, with art by Mark Buckingham and Alfredo Alcala. Painted cover by Dave McKean. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

HERO HOTLINE #4
(of a 6-issue mini-series)
Mister Muscle is charged with murder . . . Hot Shot gets carried away trying to break someone of the smoking habit . . . and what just might be the long-missing Americommando is discovered frozen in a block of ice. Written by Bob Rozakis, with art by Stephen DeStefano and Kurt Schaffenberger. Cover by DeStefano and Karl Kesel. *(New Format)* $1.75

THE HUNTRESS #4
The Huntress intercedes in a battle over turf between the mobs of Little Italy and Chinatown even as she continues tracking down her family's murderer with a clue that strikes at her heart. Written by Joey Cavalieri, with art and cover by Joe Staton and Bob Smith. $1.00

JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA #28
Finally . . . Ice Maiden melts down and agrees to go on a date with Blue Beetle—and they run into the old Lantern villain Black Hand. Written by Keith Giffen and J.M. DeMatteis. Pencilled by Ty Templeton and Mike McKone, with inks by Joe Rubinstein. Cover by Kevin Maguire. $.75

JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE #4
The group finally discovers who has been trying to discredit them . . . and it takes them back to Bialya for a "final" confrontation with the Queen Bee. Written by Keith Giffen and J.M. DeMatteis, pencilled by Bart Sears, inked by Joe Rubinstein. Cover by Sears. $.75

JUSTICE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL #3
Join the JLI and see the world as we take a whirlwind tour of the team's embassies in Tokyo, Brazil, Moscow, London, and Canberra and, of course, Paris. Written by Keith Giffen and J.M. DeMatteis, with art by Mike McKone and Joe Rubinstein. Also, special J'onn J'onzz/Batman tale by Giffen, DeMatteis, and penciller Tim Gula. Plus, Who's Who layouts of the Embassies! $1.75

JUSTICE LEAGUE: A NEW BEGINNING Trade Paperback
In case you missed it the first time around, DC proudly re-presents the first seven issues of the JUSTICE LEAGUE, together for the first time in a 184-page trade paperback edition, featuring an introduction by editor Andy Helfer and a new wraparound cover by Kevin Maguire and Al Gordon. $12.95

L.E.G.I.O.N. '89 #6
Dox's new police force attacks Cairn's biggest drug lord . . . who happens to be Garryn Bek's father-in-law. Written by Keith Giffen and Alan Grant, with art by Barry Kitson and Mark McKenna. Cover by Kevin Maguire. *(New Format)* $1.50

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #62
Part 3 of the 4-part "Magic Wars": As magic takes control of the galaxy, a Legionnaire dies in the chaos. Written by Paul Levitz, with art by Keith Giffen and Mike DeCarlo. Cover by Steve Lightle. *(Deluxe Format)* $1.75

MANHUNTER #15
Manhunter makes a big mistake when he encounters an illusionist called Mirage who knocks him into dreamland. Written by John Ostrander and Kim Yale, with art by Doug Rice and Pablo Marcos. Cover by Rice. $1.00

MISTER MIRACLE #6
It's beginning to look like open house at the Frees' residence as Gnort, that gnarly unearthly Green Lantern, drops by for a visit. Written by Keith Giffen and J.M. DeMatteis and pencilled by Mike McKone. $1.00

NEW GODS #5
To avert disaster in America, Orion destroys half of the Bug Mounds in New Genesis . . . and incurs the wrath of Forager. Written by Mark Evanier, with art by Paris Cullins and Bob Lewis. Cover by Cullins and Scott Hanna. *(New Format)* $1.50

NEW GODS #5

NEW GUARDIANS #10
Tom Kalmaku spent a large part of his life as the unofficial sidekick to a super-hero, but now he must come to grips with super-powers of his own and learn to deal with his newfound importance to the destiny of The New Guardians. Written by Cary Bates, with art and cover by Pat Broderick. *(New Format)* $1.25

THE NEW TITANS #57
Memories of the early days of the original Titans and the story of a simple man named Gnaark are recalled. Guest-starring Lilith. Written by Marv Wolfman, with art by Mark Bright and Romeo Tanghal. Cover by George Pérez. *(Deluxe Format)* $1.75

THE PHANTOM #4
A desperate call to Africa brings the Ghost Who Walks back to America as the ugly spectre of racism stalks the town where the Phantom went to college and met the woman he loves. Written by Mark Verheiden, with art and cover by Luke McDonnell. *(New Format)* $1.50

POWER OF THE ATOM #14
The murderously manic mayhem of Humbug plagues the Atom and hits him where he really lives. Written by Roger Stern, with art and cover by Kevin Nowlan and K.S. Wilson. $1.00

BOOKS SHIPPING IN MAY

THE QUESTION #28
With Myra on the mend, Hub City is up for grabs by differing neighborhood factions who have started taking the law into their own hands. That is, until Lady Shiva shows up . . . offering her sword for hire. Written by Dennis O'Neil, with art and cover by Denys Cowan and Malcolm Jones III. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. Deluxe Format.)* $1.75

THE QUESTION #28

THE QUESTION ANNUAL #2
The Question and guest-star Green Arrow team up to face the price of a truly crime-free society in a tale by Dennis O'Neil and Bill Wray. Part One of two—concluded in GREEN ARROW ANNUAL #2. Also, a story recalling the Question's earliest days as a crimefighter, by O'Neil and Shea Anton Pensa. Plus, WHO'S WHO pages on all the major characters. Cover by Wray. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. Deluxe Format.)* $3.50

SANDMAN #7
It's the final showdown between the Sandman and Dr. Destiny in the dream realm. Who will rule it? Written by Neil Gaiman, with art by Mike Dringenberg and Malcolm Jones III. Painted cover by Dave McKean. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. Deluxe Format.)* $1.50

SECRET ORIGINS #42
The secret origin of one of the most mysterious Legionnaires, Phantom Girl, by Tom and Mary Bierbaum, with art by Dave Cockrum and Larry Mahlstedt. Also, the secrets of the Grim Ghost are revealed by Roy Thomas and Mike Bair. Cover by Dick Giordano and Karl Kesel. $1.50

SGT. ROCK SPECIAL #4
Re-presenting "Generals Don't Die," by Robert Kanigher and Joe Kubert, a two-part combat classic from *Our Army At War* #147 and #148. Plus, "The Battle of Morro Castle," by David Michelinie and Walter Simonson, and "Toy Soldier," drawn by Bernard Krigstein; and "Flying Camera," a 1950s classic by Wally Wood. Cover by Simonson. $2.00

SKREEMER #2
(of a 6-part mini-series)
Who is Veto Skreemer? Here you'll find his story, starting with his days in the youth gangs and continuing through his rise to power as a ruthless leader in the future Era of the Gangs. Written by Pete Milligan, with art and cover by Brett Ewins. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. Deluxe Format.)* $2.00

SPECTRE #27
Redditch infects the world's computers, and the Spectre deals with more of the zombie surrogates. Part 4 of 6 in "The Ghost in the Machine." Written by Doug Moench, pencilled by Tom Artis, inked by Ron Busch. Cover by Artis. *(New Format)* $1.50

STARMAN #12
Starman goes up against the Power Elite in a do-or-die battle that leaves someone dead . . . and Dr. Melrose in big, big trouble. Written by Roger Stern, with art by Tom Lyle and Bob Smith. Cover by Lyle. $1.00

SUICIDE SQUAD #30
Part 10 of the 11-part "JANUS DIRECTIVE": The deadly machinations of Kobra's Janus Directive reach their grand finale aboard the arch-villains' Space Ark, where the fate of the free world hangs in the balance. Written by John Ostrander and Kim Yale, with art by John K. Snyder and Karl Kesel. Cover by Kesel. $1.00

SUICIDE SQUAD #30

SUPERMAN BASEBALL CAP
Look . . . up on your head. It's a beret . . . it's a porkpie hat. No, it's the Superman baseball cap. The cap is royal blue poly-poplin with the Superman "S-shield" logo embroidered in red, yellow, and black. One size fits all. $7.95

SUPERMAN #33
The 100,000-year-old holy man (introduced in Action Comics Annual #2) turns the last existing Kryptonian artifact over to Superman, fulfilling both their destinies. Written by Roger Stern, with art and cover by Kerry Gammill and Dennis Janke. $.75

SUPERMAN #33

THE UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY OF LEX LUTHOR #1
Clark Kent is arrested for the brutal murder of down-and-out biographer Peter Sands . . . who, coincidentally, was working on "The Unauthorized Biography of Lex Luthor." But Luthor desires the facts uncovered by Sands's research be kept dead and buried. This one-shot special is written by James Hudnall, with art by Eduardo Barreto and full-process coloring by Adam Kubert. Painted cover by Eric Peterson. *(Prestige Format)* $3.95

UNKNOWN SOLDIER #8
(of a 12-issue maxi-series)
In the frozen wastelands of Siberia, the Soldier takes on his Soviet counterpart in a duel to the death . . . but the Soldier refuses to kill. Written by James Owsley, with art and cover by Phil Gascoine. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.75

WONDER WOMAN #32
A special two-story issue, featuring an untold tale of Paradise Island . . . and Steve Trevor and Lord Hermes—America's newest odd couple. Written by George Pérez, with art by Tom Grummett and Will Blyberg. Cover by Pérez. $1.00

YOUNG ALL-STARS #27
Part 1 of the 3-part "The Sons of Dawn": "Iron" Munro's father is alive, well, and super-powered and dangerous. Written by Roy and Dann Thomas, with art by Ron Harris and Bob Downs. *(New Format)* $1.75

people at WORK

How the Old is Made New Again

It probably hasn't escaped the attention of long-time DC readers that a lot of what they know about our characters no longer holds true. That's because over the past several years, a vast number of these characters have undergone renovation, some with a simple shoring up of the foundation, others a total rebuilding from foundation on up.

Different creators, of course, take different tacks when facing the prospect of making something old new again. But despite the approaches mentioned by the host of DC writers and artists below, there are a couple of common denominators that run through each tale. All share an abiding respect for and a debt to their source material, and they all hope to leave their own mark on the characters they've revamped.

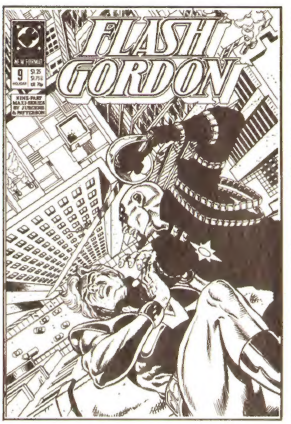
Writer Denny O'Neil came to prominence in the early 1970s with his work on GREEN LANTERN & GREEN ARROW, BAT LASH, and BATMAN. Denny was instrumental in the revitalization of the Caped Crusader, returning him to his roots. "As I recall," Denny says, "they came to me and said the TV version of the character was dead and asked if I had any ideas on how to revamp him. The idea we had was to return to what Batman had once been, to go back and find out what had made the character popular in the first place, rediscover his essence.

"I had always seen Batman as very grim, a loner, operating on the fringe of society and reality. I think it was by the luck of the draw that Neal Adams got to draw that first story ("Secret of the Waiting Graves")." With that bit of luck, the team of Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams helped create the Batman we know today.

Several years later, artist David Mazzucchelli teamed with writer Frank Miller to retell The Dark Knight Detective's early years and rework his legend in BATMAN: YEAR ONE. "Frank had gotten the idea for Batman's origin and early years when he was thinking of a restructuring of the character a few years before. Most of the ideas were used in THE DARK KNIGHT series, but some of it was still kicking around in his head.

"By the time I started work on YEAR ONE, I had worked out a simplified, short-hand approach that I feel makes comics work to their best advantage. My main influence for Batman himself came from a lot of what went before me. I went back to the first two years of stories, as well as the work of a variety of artists to see the different ways the character had been done, and I tried to come up with an approach to depicting Batman that felt comfortable to me but was still in line with the traditional Batman."

While William Messner-Loebs's job wasn't strictly a revamping of another old-time DC character, the Flash, he did take what his predecessor had done on the revitalized character several steps further. "I wanted to bring back the real sense of wonder about the speed element," Bill said of his new charge. "That sort of thing went away after the first few issues . . . remember the famous scene in the origin story where Barry Allen grabs the falling tray of food out of thin air? I also want to investigate the nature of Flash's speed, come up with some interesting ideas on how he got his powers, the actual mechanism that drives him, and its nature from Wally West's point of view. I'll also be dealing with how he lost his powers, of course, and how he's going to get them back.



"Oh, and no one in any book I'm writing is ever going to go faster than the speed of light. It's the linchpin that holds the universe together and if you violate that, you don't have any basis for 'reality.' I'm sorry, but you can go fast enough without exceeding the speed of light.

"Another thing I'm doing," Bill continued, "is to . . . well, not precisely bring Barry Allen back as a character, since he's dead, but he will be a *presence* in the book. Barry was the biggest influence in Wally's life, and when he hits bottom, as he usually does, he's going to be remembering Barry and what he meant to him.

"As for Flash himself, Mike Baron had him as a guy with a mouth and an attitude, and that part I'd like to keep. But I see him as perhaps more likeable than Mike did, so I'll probably be going in that direction."

Speaking of Mike Baron, he was also recently involved in the overhaul of a popular character. "Deadman's an interesting character to deal with. I mean, he's dead, you know? I won't exactly be following what's gone on before. I'm trying to explore the philosophical ramifications of a guy who's dead. Deadman's been given the opportunity, as a ghost, to explore human behavior from a detached point of view, without being involved. But, of course, he is involved, jumping inside people's bodies and taking over.

"He gets caught up in the old conundrum. He's been charged by Rama Kushna with striking a balance between good and evil, and the only way he's got to do that is by possessing people's bodies. He finds himself C.I.A. director, making policy of major importance without really understanding what he's doing, so this spiritually directed fighter for good winds up a figure of considerable power who's co-opted by that power, doing inadvertent evil. I'm also having fun with the fact that Deadman's kind of the link between the worlds of the living and the dead."

Denys Cowan took a character who had appeared in a handful of stories published in the 1960s by Charlton Comics and, with writer Denny O'Neil, created something entirely their own. Denys says, "I was aware of the Question character, though not through the original Steve Ditko version that Charlton published in the mid-1960s. I first saw the character as done by Alex Toth in Charlton Bullseye (a fanzine from the 1970s dedicated to the Charlton characters).

"I was impressed with Toth's work, and I read through the entire original series by Ditko when I got the assignment, but I decided to completely ignore what they had done before and establish my own look and style on the book. I respect Ditko tremendously and I love his art, but my Question is not his Question."

Writer/Artist Karl Kesel: "When I was working on HISTORY, there was this page dedicated to the dead heroes, and as I inked the character Dove, I got the idea for this Dove. The idea germinated for a year or more. Barbara [Kesel, his wife and an editor at DC] and I had been throwing ideas back and forth the whole time, and I wanted to write the series but didn't have the experience to do it myself, so we decided to co-write it.

"We came up with a real reason for there to be a Hawk and Dove. They're not just a chance super-hero team, but were created to take part in the war between the Lords of Order and Chaos.

"I remembered Hawk and Dove from the TEEN TITANS and something always appealed to me about Hawk. He was like The Batman, only a lot stupider. I liked the idea of this character who had all that power but no foresight. When he gets mad he's this unstoppable machine that keeps ripping things apart. Hawk is a lot like a werewolf in that a transformation comes over him before he goes wild. It's really horrible to see.

"That's where the new Dove comes in, to act as his common sense. Dove moves so fast that the character is virtually untouchable, so we're treating Dove sort of like a ghost. I think it's very effective."

Flash Gordon has only recently come to DC in the form of a nine-issue maxi-series, but the character's been around since the 1930s, beginning as a syndicated newspaper strip by Alex Raymond. It was written, redrawn, and revitalized for the 1980s and DC Comics by Dan Jurgens. "I've always been a big fan of Flash Gordon, Alex Raymond, and just about everybody else who had ever worked on the strip, so that made it quite a charge for me to work on the series. I went out and hunted down just about everything I could lay my hands on that Flash Gordon had appeared in, from the comic strip to the 1930s Buster Crabbe movie serials, comics, whatever, before I got to work on the series.

"It pretty much boiled down to the fact that Flash Gordon had been done so many times, in so many different forms, that I wanted to do something different with him, but not lose sight of who he's been all along. I wanted to remain true to the spirit of Flash Gordon without rehashing things."

FIRESTORM

From the archives of the DC Comics Library, we bring you the cover of FIRESTORM #1 (1978), the first appearance of Firestorm.